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ABSTRACT

This project is designed to help secondary school students prepare for participation in the electoral process as informed citizens. The project has students focus on current events pertaining to the U.S. election process. They study basic government concepts found in the Constitution, such as Separation of Powers, as well as practices that have become informal institutions, such as parties and nominating conventions. Six to eight weeks prior to an election, students collect, organize, and analyze information concerning the candidates, parties, and issues in the election. From these data, students write a scenario for a "Meet the Candidates" class session, in which students role play actual candidates. The candidate surrogates debate one another in front of their fellow students. The student audience then decides who is the best qualified candidate. They let their opinion be known in a "straw poll." Finally, students follow the results of the actual election on television, radio, and in the press. These materials include the following information: project overview, rationale for the project, objectives, profile of skills and activities, planning the project, implementing the project, evaluation procedures, a selected bibliography for content input, and sample handouts for content input. (DB)

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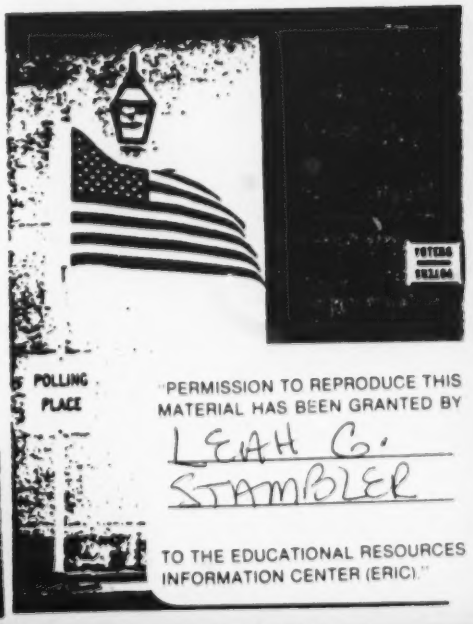
13... GOING ON 18:

PREPARING FOR THE FRANCHISE



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CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

THE PROJECT: Students get close to the spirit and excitement of local, state, and national elections by role playing the actual candidates for public office, and by seeking the votes of an informed electorate made up of their peers. Students focus on the current events pertaining to the American election process. They study basic governmental concepts of the written Constitution(Division of Powers and Separation of Powers), as well as practices that have become part of the unwritten Constitution (parties and nominating conventions) during this time.

Six to eight weeks prior to an actual election, students collect, organize, and analyze information pertaining to the candidates, parties, and issues in the election. The League of Women Voters and the candidates themselves are invaluable sources of information.

From the available data, students write a scenario for a "Meet the Candidates" type class session, where students stand in for the actual candidates. These candidate surrogates debate one another in front of their informed fellow students. The student audience then decides who is the best qualified candidate. They let their opinion be known during a "straw poll." Students follow the results of the election on television, radio and in the press.

THE STUDENTS: All ability groups of students between grades seven and twelve could utilize this project. Class size may be small or large without harming the outcomes of the project. Students should meet from three to five times weekly to accomplish the goals of the project.

THE STAFF: The Social Studies teacher functions as a facilitator for the duration of the project. The educator should be skilled in the teaching of critical thinking skills and have a working knowledge of the governmental and political structure of the American system of representation.

MATERIALS AND FACILITIES: Filmstrips and videotapes on American government, information from political parties and the League of Women Voters(LWV) are essential to the project's success. The project may be conducted in the regular classroom. Movable desks/chairs are conducive to small group preparation, and are invaluable for staging the "Meet the Candidates" large group sessions.

OUTSIDE RESOURCES: Guest speakers from political parties and the LWV enrich the project. Students must follow political news in the media on a daily basis.

OVERALL VALUE: Students feel that they become part of the process in which they are too young to participate directly. They gain confidence in their ability to evaluate information and choose the right candidates.

It seems that students take the information from the classroom to their homes and discuss politics with their families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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1. RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

1.1 The preservation of a representative form of government (Republic) in the United States of America depends upon a citizenry well versed in the nuances of its governmental structure, the electoral process, and the function of the Constitution.

1.2 The pluralistic nature of the American population requires a citizenry capable of utilizing the machinery of government to protect the rights of the individual in society, and to effect compromise in the political process.

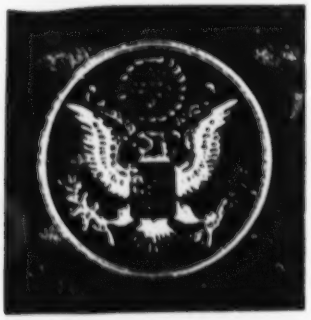
1.3 American political practices depend on the art of compromise. Consequently, American citizens need to know the techniques of negotiation and critical thinking.

1.4 The nature of American democracy requires a citizenry cognizant of the decision making process on all governmental levels and aware of its pragmatic character.

1.5 The future strength of America's political, economic, and social infrastructure depends on a well informed citizenry, capable of applying critical thinking skills in seeking solutions for national, state, and local problems.

1.6 Schools transmit American traditions and prepare the young to assume the responsibilities of adulthood at the appropriate time.

1.7 Social Studies Educators are responsible for the task of preparing the nation's school age students for their role as citizens and voters.

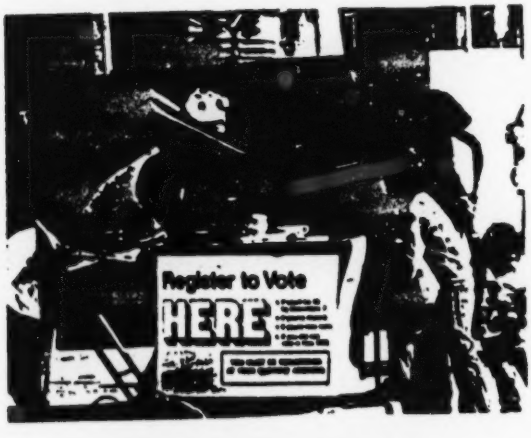


2. OBJECTIVES(as a result of this project, students will)

2.1 Cognitive: (a)identify the various candidates during a specific election period; (b)match the candidates with their respective positions on election issues; (c) diagram the operation of two Constitutional principles: Division of Powers and Separation of Powers; (d) explain the role of the Constitution as a blueprint for government; (e) explain the difference between the written and unwritten Constitution; (f) define vocabulary/terms pertinent to the American governmental and political system; (g) explain the operation of the political process in the selection of governmental officials by the American electorate.

2.2 Affective: (a) write/discuss personal position concerning the value(s) of a republican form of government(representative government); (b) recognize the importance of negotiation and compromise when working in small groups; (c) apply mastery of information learned about American government and political process by participating in and assisting with the campaign of a candidate running for public office.

2.3 Psychomotor: (a) separate fact from opinion in researching election positions of candidates; (b) make inferences from material gathered (e.g. candidates' campaign statements); (c) detect bias in statements written and said by candidates, members of the media, the electorate; (d) identify false assumptions; (e) seek validity of ideas expressed orally and in writing; (f) organize ideas in writing(e.g. outlining, diagramming, charting); (g) express ideas orally (e.g. debating, presentations, role playing).



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PROFILE OF SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

3.1 Reading for comprehension and critical thinking: newspapers, teacher made handouts on American government, news magazines, civics texts, library sources.

3.2 Listening: to news programs/commentators on TV and radio, to speeches made by candidates for office, to peers during classroom activities.

3.3 Researching: use of reference materials, data collection, organization of data, note taking, outlining, essay writing.

3.4 Writing: scripts for role playing, reflective essays, letters to candidates, letters to press(editorial letters), position papers on election issues.

3.5 Presenting: debates, role playing, simulations, statements of personal opinions, panel discussions, skits, large and small group discussions.

3.6 Negotiating: working out personal priorities with small groups to reach consensus, preparation for oral presentations, setting ground rules and procedures for "Meet the Candidates" session.

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4. PLANNING THE PROJECT

4.1 Decide how many sessions you expect to devote to the project "13...Going on 18: Preparing for the Franchise." Create a calendar for your use and/or display in the classroom for the students' use.

4.2 Select which concepts pertaining to the nature of American government and the political process you intend to include in the project.Age, grade and ability levels of the target population should determine your choice of concepts to be included in the project.

4.3 Gather teaching resources pertaining to the selected concepts to be included in the project (e.g. filmstrips, videotapes, diagrams, illustrations, texts, the Constitution, magazines, journals, newspapers, motion pictures).

4.4 Contact and make appointments with members of the community who are willing to visit your classroom during the course of the project. These community resource people should include: chapter members of your local League of Women Voters, city/town leaders from the two major political parties; candidates for public office; political campaign leaders/staff members; and governmental officials. Ask the LWV to bring a demonstration ballot box to the classroom when they visit.

4.5 Make arrangements with the local political party leaders for your students to visit a polling place on election day (preferably in your own school). Discuss the possibility of your students volunteering their services to both political parties during the election campaign. Secure permission from students' parents for this activity.

4.6 Make arrangements with your school librarian for your students to use the card catalogue and reference materials in the school library. Plan with the librarian for conducting sessions in the library.

4.7 Make arrangements with the appropriate school personnel for your use of the photocopy machine, TV monitor, VCR, tape recorder, overhead projector, filmstrip project, and any other equipment needed to utilize your teaching resources and materials. If possible make arrangements to have your sessions videotaped for discussion and evaluation by students during and at the end of the project.

4.8 Discuss your plans with your department chairperson, colleagues, administrators and students' parents. This is a good way to encourage wider school cooperation for the success of the project.

4.9 Consult sources on the teaching of critical thinking skills for incorporation in your teaching strategies.

4.10 Consult sources as to the procedures to be followed for various teaching techniques (e.g. small groups, debates, panel discussions, role playing, simulations).

4.11 Prepare a letter to the students' parents in which you explain the goals and strategies of the project. Invite parents to attend the class sessions at any stage of the project, especially when guest speakers are scheduled to make presentations to the students.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

5.1 Motivation: Teacher encourages student readiness to participate in the project by infusing the Social Studies curriculum with current events pertaining to a forthcoming election. This is done six to eight weeks prior to the election date. This may be accomplished through the classroom showing of teacher made video tapes of news programs and/or students reading of daily newspaper articles pertaining to the election preliminaries. In both instances, the teacher should prepare handout sheets which require the students to read, listen, write, discuss, and raise questions about the political process, voting, and the structure of American government. Ten to fifteen minutes of discussion pertaining to the forthcoming election should be conducted three to five times weekly, preferably at the beginning of the lesson.

5.2 Content Input: Teacher provides students with the opportunity to secure background information pertaining to the nature of representative government, as practiced in the United States of America. This information should include: (a) the meaning of the terms written and unwritten Constitution; (b) the reasons why a written Constitution is needed in society; (c) an overview of the articles and amendments found in the American Constitution; (d) significant principles found in the Constitution which are inherent in the American governmental structure (i.e. Division of Powers, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Protection of the rights of the individual);and (e) examples of the unwritten Constitution (i.e. political parties, cabinet, primaries, nominating conventions,election procedures).

This information may be provided to the students in teacher made or commercially prepared diagrams, film strips, videotapes, maps of congressional districts in Connecticut, maps of the United States showing the distribution of electoral votes and number of representatives to the House of Representatives from each state of the Union, selected issues of Junior/Senior Scholastic magazine and Update, excerpts from the Constitution, readings from civics texts, copies of magazine and/or journal articles (e.g.Time, Newsweek, U.S.News). At this stage of the project, teacher should conduct class sessions in the school library, as needed.

The students should be actively engaged in the research techniques of data collection, organization of data and note taking. Students should be provided with the opportunity to share their information with their peers through the use of blackboard outlines, oral reports, small group discussions, creation of charts-diagrams-bulletin boards-posters which explain American government and /or the political process needed to select public officials in the U.S.A.

This stage of the project is an appropriate time to utilize community resources to amplify the students' mastery of the structure of American government and the operation of the political process. The LWV is an excellent source of information at this time. Teacher should instruct students on how to identify the various propaganda techniques utilized in mass communication campaigns.

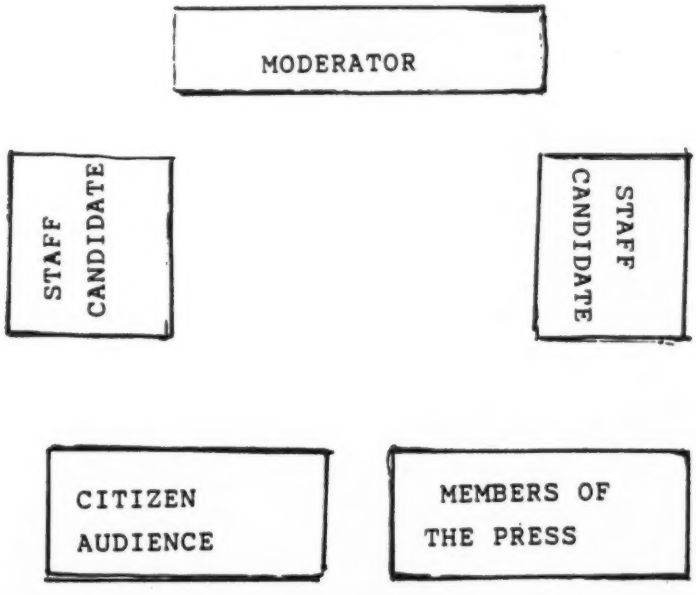
5.3 "Meet the Candidates": The students utilize the news media (newspaper articles, TV and radio broadcasts) to collect information pertaining to the candidates' biographies and positions on election issues, as well as editorials for and against the candidates. At this time it is appropriate to have candidates for office and/or campaign staff visit the class to supplement students' data collection.

Students decide among themselves who will represent the Democratic and Republican candidates for office, their respective campaign staffs, members of the press, program moderator, and citizens in the audience.

Students meet according to their agreed upon roles and divide responsibilities within each group. Candidates and staff prepare themselves to make a position statement on the election issues and to organize answers to potential questions to be asked by the opposing candidate and staff, news staff, and electorate in the audience. Candidates and campaign staffers also prepare questions to ask the opposing candidate and create campaign posters and props to be used during the "Meet the Candidates" session. Members of the press and audience groups prepare questions to ask the candidates. The student moderator and teacher prepare handouts indicating procedures and ground rules to be followed in the debate-question and answer session of "Meet the Candidates". The moderator prepares the order of the session with one representative from each of the small groups (candidates,members of the press and audience).

Students meet in small groups for as many sessions as they need to prepare themselves for the "Meet the Candidates" session.

On the day of the "Meet the Candidates" session, students move the chairs/desks according to this suggested arrangement:



Students set up their campaign materials and posters in the room and decorate their assigned area with props that they have created for the session.

Moderator opens the session by distributing written ground rules to students, and orally reviewing the procedures with his/her peers(e.g. opening statements by each candidate, cross-questioning by the candidates, questions from members of the press to the candidates and their answers, questions from the audience for the candidates and their answers). It is possible that the "Meet the Candidates" session may require more than one class period, depending upon the grade and ability levels of the students involved in the project.

5.4 Straw Poll: Students prepare ballots for use in classroom election during the week preceding election day. Students vote in class using a secret ballot, and they tally the results of the vote. Students post the results for their class in the room. Students discuss factors that influenced their voting choices (a modified "exit poll"). Students discuss the importance of "voter turn out"in the forthcoming election. Students are encouraged by the teacher to remind citizens over the age of eighteen to vote on election day

5.5Election Day: Students follow the results of the actual election, as reported on radio and TV. Students fill in teacher prepared chart based on information given in the media.

5.6 Post-Election Day Analysis: Students read newspapers and news magazines after election day. They collect information pertaining to the results of the election, and analysis by various commentators. Students write a short analysis of why the various candidates won or lost, using information from the news media, personal interviews with voting age adults, and discussion with their families. Students compare the results of their straw poll with those of the actual election.

5.7 Closure: Students write an essay (2-3 pages in length) and discuss its content, indicating what they need to know about the American government and the political process in order for them to exercise the franchise appropriately. Students write their views as to why they should exercise the franchise when they reach voting age. Students write their views as to the importance of representative government and what part they should play in the continuation of a republican form of government.

6. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The following techniques were used to determine the extent of goals achievement: (a) cognitive goals: pencil/paper tests of substantive items taught in the project; (b) affective goal: essay written by students on the value of representative government; and, (c) psychomotor goal: oral presentations evaluated by students and teacher, using criteria of clarity of thought, language usage, strength of position presented during debates.

7. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CONTENT INPUT

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McClenaghan, William A., Magruder's American Government-Revised 1985 Edition, Newton, Mass., Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1985.

O'Connor, John R. and Robert M. Goldberg, Exploring American Citizenship, New York, Globe Book Company, 1983.

Ritchie, Donald A. et al, Heritage of Freedom: History of the United States to 1877, Volume One, New York, Scribner Educational Publishers, 1986.

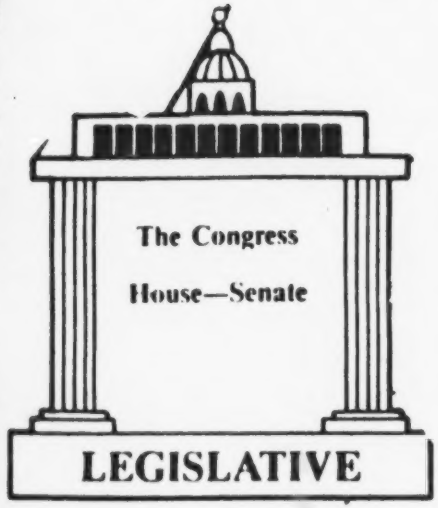
Update, Scholastic Magazine, Vol. 120, No. 10, January 29, 1988 "Election '88"

Wilson, John H., Real Life Citizenship: A Functional Skills Program from Scholastic, New York, Scholastic Book Services, 1979.

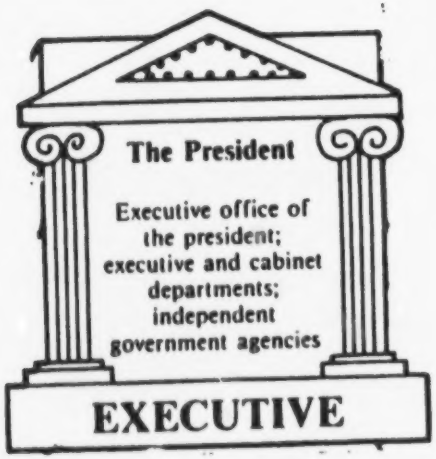
NOTES:
Numerous brochures are available from the League of Women Voters concerning political parties, candidates' biographies during specific election periods, how to register, how to use the balloting machines

Project '87 (sponsored by the Bicentennial Commission) Lessons on the Constitution

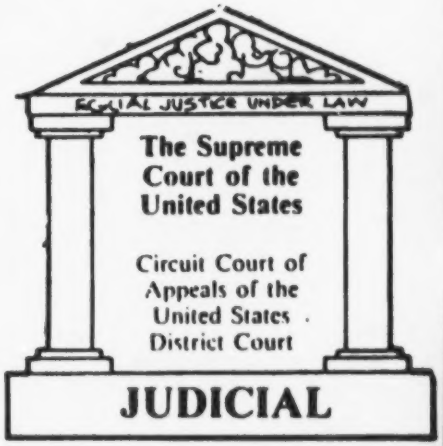
ORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT



Article I — Legislative Branch


The President
Executive office of the president; executive and cabinet departments; independent government agencies
EXECUTIVE

Article II — Executive Branch


EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW
The Supreme Court of the United States
Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States
District Court
JUDICIAL

Article III — Judicial Branch

Article IV	Relationships Among States
Article V	Amending the Constitution
Article VI	Supreme Law of the Land
Article VII	Ratifying the Constitution

Amendments

1 freedom of religion, press, speech, assembly, petition
2 right to bear arms
3 quartering of soldiers
4 searches and seizures
5 life, liberty, and property
6 rights of the accused
7 right to trial by jury
8 bail and punishment
9 rights of the people
10 rights of the states
11 suits against states
12 election of the President
13 abolition of slavery
14 civil rights in the states
15 black suffrage
16 income tax
17 direct election of senators
18 national Prohibition
19 women's suffrage
20 "lame-duck" period
21 repeal of Prohibition
22 presidential term of office
23 voting in the District of Columbia
24 abolition of poll taxes
25 presidential disability and succession
26 eighteen-year-old vote

8. SAMPLE HANDOUTS FOR CONTENT INPUT

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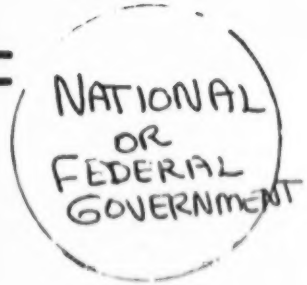
Examples of How the Constitution Divides Powers



11

TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (CONGRESS)

A

- To coin money
- To conduct foreign relations
- To regulate commerce with foreign nations & among states
- To provide an army and a navy
- To declare war
- To establish courts inferior to the Supreme Court
- To establish post offices
- To make laws necessary and proper to carry out the foregoing powers

3

- To tax articles exported from one state to another
- To violate the Bill of Rights
- To change state boundaries

(ENUMERATED)

TO STATE GOVERNMENTS

A

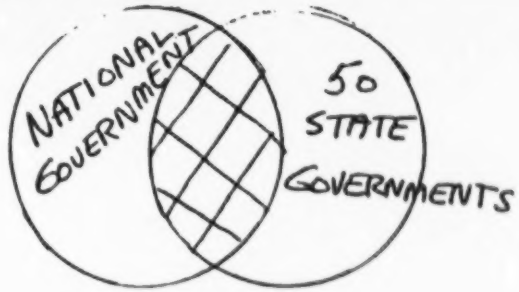
- To establish local governments
- To regulate commerce within a state
- To conduct elections
- To ratify amendments to the federal Constitution
- To take measures for public health, safety, & morals
- To exert powers the Constitution does not delegate to the national government or prohibit the states from using

B

- To tax imports or exports
- To coin money
- To enter into treaties
- To impair obligations of contracts
- To abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens (14th Amendment)

15

(RESERVED)



TO BOTH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

A

- To tax
- To borrow money
- To establish courts
- To make and enforce laws
- To charter banks and corporations
- To spend money for the general welfare
- To take private property for public purposes, with just compensation

B

- To grant titles of nobility
- To permit slavery (13th Amendment)
- To deny citizens the right to vote because of race, color, or previous servitude (14th Amendment)
- To deny citizens the right to vote because of sex (19th Amendment)

(CONCURRENT)

KEY

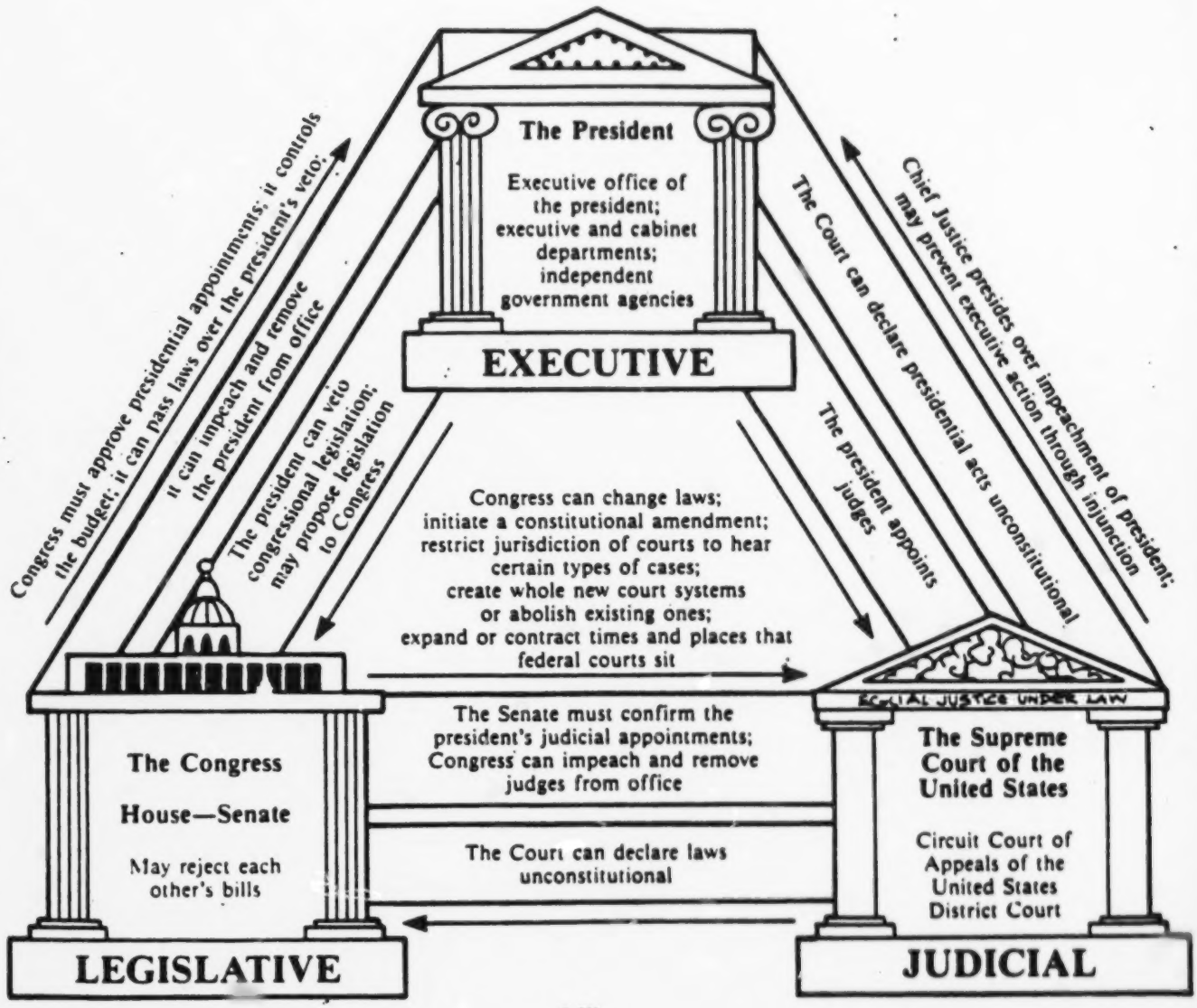
A = POWERS GRANTED

B = POWERS DENIED

= SHARED POWERS

17

Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances


The President
Executive office of the president; executive and cabinet departments; independent government agencies
EXECUTIVE
Congress must approve presidential appointments; it controls the budget; it can pass laws over the president's veto;
it can impeach and remove the president from office
The president can veto congressional legislation; may propose legislation to Congress
Congress can change laws; initiate a constitutional amendment; restrict jurisdiction of courts to hear certain types of cases; create whole new court systems or abolish existing ones; expand or contract times and places that federal courts sit
The president appoints judges
The Court can declare presidential acts unconstitutional
Chief Justice presides over impeachment of president; may prevent executive action through injunction
The Senate must confirm the president's judicial appointments; Congress can impeach and remove judges from office
The Court can declare laws unconstitutional
The Congress
House—Senate
May reject each other's bills
LEGISLATIVE
The Supreme Court of the United States
Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States District Court
JUDICIAL

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SOURCE: Lessons on the Constitution (Project '87)

VOTER REGISTRATION FORM

Please type or print in blue or black ink

1

Last Name	First Name	Initial	Jr. or Sr.

2

RESIDENCE ADDRESS No. Street	Apt. No	City or Town	Zip Code

Length of time at residence: _____ years _____ months _____ days

Mailing Address if Different

3 DATE OF BIRTH: _____ month _____ day _____ year

4

Sex	Height	Eye Color	Telephone

5 THIS FORM IS BEING USED FOR (Check One)

☐ New Registration ☐ Change of Address ☐ Change of Name ☐ Change of Party Enrollment

6 Did you ever register in this state before? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, complete the following:

Did you register under your present name?	If not, under what name did you register?	From what address did you last register?
☐ Yes ☐ No		

7 Were you born in the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, complete the following:

Date of Naturalization	City or Town	State	Number on papers
_____ month _____ day _____ year			

8 ENROLLMENT
If you wish to enroll in a political party, check the party of your choice. (Check only one)

☐ Democratic ☐ Republican
☐ Conservative ☐ Liberal
☐ Do not wish to enroll in any party

9 AFFIDAVIT
I affirm that the information above is true and correct. I understand that any false statement may subject me to penalties according to the law.

_____ Signature or Mark of Registrant Date

_____ Witness (if registrant cannot sign) Date

SOURCE: Real Life Citizenship(Scholastic)

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